

Frankford Arsenal, Building 242-246A  
South side of Craig Road between Eakin Street  
and Walbach Street  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Philadelphia

HAER No. PA-74AC

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
Mid-Atlantic Regional Office  
National Park Service  
U. S. Department of the Interior  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Frankford Arsenal, Buildings 242-246A

HAER No. PA-74AC

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Location: South side of Craig Road between Eakin Street and Walbach Street  
Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania

Quad: Frankford

Date of Construction: Building 242 - 1918  
Building 242A - 1938  
Building 242C - 1938  
Building 244A - 1941  
Building 246A - 1941  
Buildings 243-246 - 1917-1918

Significance: These nine buildings are part of a thirteen-building complex associated with the original and most elemental purpose of Frankford Arsenal, the production and storage of powder and munitions for the United States Army.

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## HISTORY

Building 242 was built as a primer packing house in 1918. By 1937, it was being used as a primer composition mixing house. In 1940, the sieving room was constructed and, a year later, the refrigerator room was added. Most recently, the building served as a general purpose magazine.

Building 242A was built as a primer composition mixing room in 1938 and most recently used as a general purpose magazine.

Building 242C was built in 1938 as a magazine.

Buildings 243-246 constitute two-thirds of six identical buildings erected in 1917-1918 as primer dryhouses. They are part of a thirteen-building complex used for primer mixing and drying. The buildings most recently served as general purpose magazines.

Building 244A was built in 1941 as a P.E.T.N. dryhouse. Beginning in 1962, when it was used for storing black powder; in 1969 it was used as a pyrotechnic lab. Its most recent use was as a high explosive magazine.

Building 246A was built in 1941 as a primer canning room. Its most recent use was as a medium caliber loading plant.

## DESCRIPTION

Building 242 is a single-story, wood frame building, with stuccoed walls, concrete foundation, and a partial basement, measuring approximately 24 feet by 50 feet. Hipped asbestos shingled roof topped with three ventilators. An open porch on the south side of the building has a corrugated metal shed roof supported by five iron posts. At the northwest corner of the building is a single-story, frame stuccoed sieving room with a hipped roof, measuring approximately 17 feet by 14 feet. Adjacent to the south side of the sieving room is a single-story concrete block refrigeration room with a flat roof measuring approximately 10 feet by 9 feet. The interior includes a foyer and two rooms with sparkproof covering over a concrete floor.

Building 242A is a single-story building on concrete foundation with stuccoed hollow tile walls and overhanging hipped, asbestos shingle roof, measuring approximately 9 feet by 7 feet. A concrete blast wall stands approximately 2 feet wide and 9 inches thick. Both the north and south sides of the building have a single eight-light window. A door is located in the east side and a single-story frame addition is attached to the south side. The interior is open, with glazed tile walls and asphalt tiled concrete floors.

Building 242C is a single-story stuccoed frame building with a concrete foundation measuring approximately 11 feet by 10 feet, with an asbestos shingled shed roof topped with a ventilator. The west facade has a six-over-six window, while the south facade has a metal entry door with an open,

shed-roofed porch. A one-foot-thick concrete barrier wall is located north of the building. The interior space is open, with a magnesite-covered concrete floor.

Buildings 243-246 are one-story, with basement, concrete on metal lath buildings with overhanging, asbestos shingle, hipped roofs and large ventilators. Each building measures approximately 23 feet by 30 feet. Single-story storage wings on the south sides of the buildings are concrete, with half-hipped roofs. Entry doors are located on the east and west sides. Two window openings, with six-light, top-hinged sash, are located on each of three sides. The date 1917 is cast into the north wall of each building. The interior space is open, with the exception of an entrance hall running along the north side of the building. The wood floors are laid with sparkproof covering. Concrete barrier walls, three feet thick and approximately eleven feet high, with round-arched iron gates in the north wall, surround each building.

Building 244A is a single-story, stuccoed, hollow tile structure with a concrete foundation and an overhanging asbestos shingle hipped roof with two ventilators that measures approximately 10 feet by 10 feet. A single-story wing on the north side of the building is composed of stuccoed hollow tile. The building entry is located on the west side of the wing. A single six-light, top-hinged window is located on both the north and east facades. A concrete blast wall, two feet thick and approximately ten feet high, surrounds the building.

Building 246A is a single-story stuccoed, hollow tile building with a concrete foundation and an overhanging asbestos shingle shed roof with a large ventilator, measuring approximately 17 feet by 8 feet. The building entry is located in the east facade. The north facade has two six-pane, top-hinged windows. The open interior space has a sparkproof concrete floor and transite ceiling.

#### SOURCE

John Milner Associates, "Historical and Archeological Survey of Frankford Arsenal" (West Chester, PA: John Milner Associates, (1979).

Report prepared for the Department of the Army, Baltimore District, Corps of Engineers, Baltimore, Maryland. Copies on file at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia Free Library, and the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

**For a complete overview on the site, see HAER No. PA-74.**

